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disintegrate the entire church. It has been able to retard Christianity's rate of progress. It has during this past quadrennium caused schism in some Christian churches. Its present mighty effort is

almost spent. Christianity as such is dealing constructively with the problem of the new time. The apocalyptic mind cannot ultimately survive in a large and significant way in the modern world.

PROFANITY

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The old distinction between sacred and profane history has long since vanished. It was a distinctly medieval discrimination, based upon a much older and widespread belief in the essential evil of matter. Hence all that side of life that had to do with material interests was linked up with evil and evil spirits. The wise and holy escaped as far as possible from the contagion of this inferior, if not positively wicked, existence and sought the things of the spirit within church walls, if not in hermit cells and conventual exercises, in pilgrimages, in fastings, and in a multitude of other self-abnegating conditions. Occasionally they came forth among men to protest against the prevailing corruption, to explain the causes of the world's misfortunes and miseries, to sound the loud call for repentance, only to retire leaving the profane multitudes to go on their inevitable way to still worse conditions, amidst which superstition was almost the only check to the grossest living of man or state.

The widespread, popular protest against these unnatural conditions, partly religious, partly philosophical, in the sixteenth century, followed by a marked

reaction in the seventeenth, led directly to that mighty movement in the Western world toward a return to nature, which was eventually to bring all thinking men out of the Slough of Despond of an essentially evil world and make so clear the wonders and beauties and helpful possibilities of nature that the modern world would be said to have been "hypnotized by the universe."

This reaction led, among other things, to an appreciation of the ancient Hebrew point of view, of the sanctity of even the material world and its highest embodiment in man, made in the image of God, with a brain to think His thoughts after Him, even His approving thoughts about matter.

The Christian religion at its sources was seen to be a fulfilment of the prophetic ideal and to present a view of nature quite out of harmony with what appeared later as the medieval concept. Much of the ancient classic lore also appealed to the modern philosopher, poet, artist, and historian. The outcome has led to the utter breaking down of the distinction between sacred and profane. The whole of modern pedagogy protests against the existence of a

profane world and a profane history. All is wonderful and sacred, fit and worthy for the study of every mind and calling, for participation by everyone in this workaday world. He who escapes is a traitor to his day and generation. A sacred obligation rests upon everyone to do a worthy part, accomplish a distinct mission, to use the material world and all its concerns as a stepping-stone, a foundation for the things of the spirit.

Our word "profane" harks back to its classic origin. A "fane" (*fanum*) was a temple, a consecrated place, to pollute which was sure, according to common belief, to bring down divine wrath upon the desecrater and all his interests. On December 25, 168 B.C., the Hebrew temple at Jerusalem was so profaned by the minions of Antiochus Epiphanes, and swine's broth dashed against its walls from within and without, that the "abomination of desolation" took possession of the holy places. Thus Pompey the Great profaned the same Holy of Holies, stalking into the darkness of the most sacred shrine, there to find that the God of the Hebrews was a spirit, to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. Such "profane" acts stirred with horror the ancient heathen world, and again and again the most sacred places and emblems of the early and medieval Christian church were flaunted by the barbarian and Muslim invader. In its earlier uses, then, the word and the idea of profanity had primarily to do with places.

The third command in the ancient Hebrew Decalogue was essentially an ordinance against profanation in any holy place or act. The first table of

that law had reference to the Godward side of man's life, as the second table dealt with the manward side. The first commandment proclaimed that God was one in contrast to the prevailing polytheism, and personal as over against an already-appearing pantheistic tendency. The second commandment says that one personal God is a spirit and may not adequately be represented in any material form. The third commandment demands that He be worshiped in spirit and in truth. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." Blasphemous worship was the greatest crime known to the Old Testament prophets, and again and again they cried out against it in most scathing terms. Taking on one's lips the Sacred Name in an act of worship, private or public, in any light, frivolous, empty, hollow, perfunctory manner—this was indeed an abomination of desolation more heinous than any desecrating act of a conquering heathen enemy or of any careless, vulgar personal use of the divine names. In indignant denunciation the prophets of Israel cry out:

"What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" saith Jehovah: "I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts." "Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies. I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting."

The Psalmist gives the typical outcry of the heart of the Hebrew scriptures as he asseverates, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

In the New Testament our Lord found no crime so heinous as pharisaic pride and blasphemous religious performances. In characterizing these he rose to the heights of righteous indignation and denunciation, weeping over the Holy City and its temple which had perverted the faith of the fathers.

The attempt to capture the primitive Christian church and swing it back into a rabbinical legalism or even into a Mosaical ritual called forth St. Paul's first great epistle—that to the Galatians—rightly denominated "The Declaration of Independence of the Spirit," probably the first written portion of the New Testament. The leaders of that early church faced and conquered this most insidious foe of all true religion; at least they stormed the citadel; and the church, from this vantage ground, has ever since been capturing the outworks.

That much remains to be done is seen from the fact that nothing today stands so solidly in the way of the Kingdom of Righteousness in the world, especially as expressed in the Christian church, as the breaking of the third commandment and the disregard of the spirit of the prophets and the New Testament. When one once takes into view the number of great hymns thoughtlessly sung, the number of prayers gone through perfunctorily, and the constant tendency to let a church service deteriorate into a hollow mockery and a profane use of sacred things, one is

inclined to fear that there is more, and that too far more heinous, "profanity" within church walls than is to be found on the outside, even in the coarse vulgarity of so much of common speech. A supposedly spiritual leader may easily be the profanest of men as he invites his audience to join him in empty and blasphemous phrases as he takes the name of the Lord his God "in vain." Every clergyman has to face this grievous temptation, into which he falls more times than he dares confess. We may not wonder, in this connection, that St. Paul, starting in by calling himself "the least of the Apostles," and going on to think of himself as "the least of all saints," realizing the frailty of his or any ministry, should denounce "sinners, of whom I am chief."

In coming to the more ordinary application of the word "profanity" it is clearly in mind that there is a much worse sort still, of which we have been speaking as briefly as the importance of the theme would allow. It is certain that the vulgar attempts at rhetorical emphasis which we call "swearing" are, at the least estimate, ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the result of sheer thoughtlessness, a matter of habit, the outcome of ignorance and bad example, and are woefully lacking in the force of utterance intended.

Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, in her forcefully written *Penobscot Man*, in speaking of the Maine lumberman and riverman, well asks, "How does it happen that in a country where neither dog, horse, ox or log will move until it is prodded with an oath, where profanity is general rather than the

exception and there is a variety and ingenuity and artistic finish about even the commonplace cursing that marks it as the work of no unpracticed tongue, how does it happen that this commonest of all vices is selected as the most censurable?"

She answers her query in a most discriminating paragraph, the sanest bit in literature on the subject of profanity. She says (pp. 30-31):

In its common forms it is neither censured nor censurable. Nor is it a vice. It is a vulgarity. There is no harm intended by the pleasant maledictions of everyday life, the oath of emphasis, the oath of affection, the oath of good fellowship just to make you feel at home, the picturesque and kindly cursing of the fellow of scanty vocabulary.

But now and then arises a man of different temper, who blasphemes violently, who studies it as an art, who, not using it as a neighborly bypath of speech, so lavishes his energies on purely rhetorical anathemas, that he chills the blood of even these seasoned woodsmen and rivermen. Such men, they say, will sometimes swear five minutes at a time without stopping, and swear "most horrid"; and these, they say, are "wicked men," because, as they know from dread experience, no man can defy the Almighty and come out scatheless.

The point of view of this wise student of human nature is patly illustrated by that well-known inscription on a western tombstone under which rough miners had buried a cherished companion, and on which they inscribed words intended to be both reverent and tender: "Here lies the body of Joe Smith who died . . . (date). He done his damnest; angels could no more."

It is certainly a misfortune that in our English speech so many of our words for deity and for the popularly supposed acts of enraged deity begin with gutturals or dentals. In moments of excitement in play or anger or pain or fear the throat contracts and the teeth shut; consequently any expression that tears its way through is bound to begin with those very same gutturals and dentals. When your name of deity is "Bog" (Slavic) or "Allah" (Arabic) there is little relief in any fierce utterance of the same in time of excitement; nor may we think of the people of the Greek orthodox faith or the devotee of Islam as more reverent than the average user of the English tongue. It is hard to see how any sort of genius can do what genius often sets itself to do and make out of our misfortune an asset, unless our poignant temptation shall put us more on our guard and give thereby heavenly thoughts to ward off the danger. A large share of it is occasioned by a lack of control, a giving way to a spoiled temper, a childish thing bordering on senility and insanity. Of whom was it said that "He could keep silent in seven different languages"? If it could be thoroughly inculcated in all minds that ordinary vulgar profanity is a weakness, a stupidity, an essential lack of virility, a negation of the real purpose of the user, an ignorance of the first principles of rhetoric, we would at once see a marked decrease in silly objurgation.

A careful student of profanity as ordinarily found soon comes to the certainty of its great barrenness and monotony. Take a day's tramp with a group of men of this linguistically

poverty-stricken type and you will find that a superb mountain, thrusting its crown up into the eternal snows, is "a hell of a mountain." A river sweeping around a bend that attracts the attention of even the inartistic eye is "a hell of a river." Everything awakening enthusiasm turns out to be in its turn "a hell of a tree," "a hell of a flower," "a hell of a horse," "a hell of a girl"—all in the most innocent fashion. It seems sheer childishness, pitiable puerility and vacuity. It loses even the force of a parrot's monotonous garrulity. While here and there some power of native ability and marked individuality may produce an unexpected raciness of lurid utterance that might possibly be thought original, for the most part men of profane speech are all ironed out into a sameness that becomes tedious to the last degree.

We admire the handy man, the man who has himself so perfectly in physical control that instinctively he knows what to do and how to do in every exigency thrust upon him. Our admiration for such a one is coined in the adage "Handsome is as handsome does." It is a worthy ambition for any man to master any native handicap of awkwardness or undevelopment and stand forth every inch a man. In a similar way it is a fine use of time and study to master speech and to command on every occasion "words fitly spoken." Originality and appropriateness and force of speech may be to a marked degree at the command of the average man and woman, and to a degree of everyone.

It is clear to a student of human nature that any normal human being

must have a reasonable stock of expletives for use in the excitements of sport or pain or other exigency of life. The pity of it is that one is tempted to select expletives of a character that are utterly lacking in originality. It seems quite needless under such circumstances to drop into the colloquial utterances of men of generally filthy verbiage. Far better is it, if expletives must be had, to keep out of the slough of despond of vulgar profanity and deliberately choose some high ground worthy of the individuality involved.

One of the notable theories of the origin of human speech, and a very plausible one, is that man began his invention of language by the use of interjections, cries of fear or pain or joy. At any rate the demand for expression along those lines may be accounted primitive and universal in man and not to be eradicated. We may be sure it will never cease to be a constituent part of the race. Utterance must be had for every phase of human life. Vigor of body, mind, and heart will always call for definite, strong, emotional expression. No study of our theme can stop with the negative side of it. It is imperative that, however imperfect human speech must always remain, it shall yet furnish man with words fitted to ease the mind under conditions of deep emotion and to convey one's feelings with force and effectiveness to others.

Music is a parallel instrument, rousing the soul of the performer to high states of feeling and conveying the same to others in a marked degree. Certain instruments have well-known special powers—the fife, the drum, the

bugle, the bell—often welding together vast audiences to the performance of some high endeavor. In tragedy and comedy music sweeps the whole gamut of human emotions.

We live in an epoch when more is demanded of human speech in utterance of a high moral indignation than perhaps was ever known to man. It is no time for cheap, ribald rottenness of vulgar profanity. It is a time for deeds rather than words; but when adequate words are attempted language is strained to the utmost. The intensity of feeling makes all former metaphors and symbols beggarly, when we cast up the account of human misery present among men and entailed on generations yet unborn. It is now a fundamental in pedagogics that anger is a highly desirable quality; indeed, that to be without the possibility of it is to be dehumanized. The child that fails to exhibit at least traces of it is accounted deficient and a subject for pathological treatment. The capacity for moral indignation, the rising of the soul in hatred of cruelty and injustice, is accounted a necessary attribute of human nature. The Hebrew prophets lived in such times, and gave the world lofty utterance of anathema in their denunciation of evil in all its forms of gluttony and drunkenness and in their towering invective against the traitorous slacker in time of national need.

"Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (Judg. 5:23). "Woe to the bloody city (Nineveh); it is full of lies and rapine" (Nahum). "Woe

to pastors that destroy the sheep." These are a few out of thousands of fierce and just maledictions against crime and evil in high places and low; and the impassioned Heart of Nazareth cried out with a divine pathos, "Woe unto thee Chorazin!" "Woe unto thee Bethsaida!" "Woe unto you scribes, pharisees, hypocrites!" The Bible is surcharged with righteous indignation against evil. Its God is a mighty hater; and that makes it possible for Him to be a mighty lover (John 3:16).

One of the great lessons a warrior has to learn is that of self-control under all conditions. We are all summoned to the same high standard. Balance of body calls for balance of mind and soul. Life is mainly made up of positive things, of approvals, the ardent love of truth, of justice, of kindness, of industry, of co-operation in the great things of life, such as home and country and humanity. Strong natures lead the way in both deeds and expression. Their clear, powerful utterance encourages all who hear or know. But incidentally they must denounce and fight the wrong. They must have a fitting language of condemnation. But what we know as "profanity" is utterly inadequate for their use. It is belittling and unheroic. It smirches the user more than it does the denounced. When you call a man a "scoundrel" you mar the force of the epithet by supplementary adjectives picked up from the gutters of speech.

In the lighter, jovial, companionable side of life, with its whimsicalities of utterance that give piquancy and spice to conversation, there should be a reasonable individuality and originality

of word and phrase, selected by some natural process, but inoffensive to the ear of the pure and devout-minded. If there is anything so bad as to see a woman drunk it is to hear a woman swear.

In these recent days we have been advertising American characteristics to the ends of the earth, the good and the bad. In the worst sense of the word the American is the profanest man on the earth. Just why is another story; but the fact is a saddening one, and the characteristic he makes so public is as unworthy as it is essentially misleading as a test of character. There are a lot of worse things, such, for instance, as those set forth in the opening of this article. American profanity is rightly explained by our European friends as a "provincial" trait, due to ignorance and a western tendency to exaggerate and thus to weaken the rhetorical effect of speech. It is to be hoped that our fighting men have come home wiser and better men, with a marked control in manner and speech, a finer balance of judgment, a tendency to say what they mean in plain straight speech and with a chivalry of utterance that shall be in keeping with their knightly deeds of valor for country and humanity.

One of the largest organizations in the Catholic churches of America and Canada is entitled "The Holy Name Society," now numbering several million men and boys, all pledged under the most solemn oath to revere the name of God and all his attributes and to abstain wholly from swearing. Each year great processions of this body parade our streets to witness for their aim and thereby to plead with all men to join in the holy cause. All that this great communion can do to discourage and forbid "swearing" is called to the aid of this worthy organization. It is getting to be that "profanity" in America is mainly practiced by bad Catholics and non-Catholics. The law of the land is largely against the vulgar and vicious practice and it is illegal to indulge in it in public places. The schools have always discouraged the practice. It may be they could do much more than they do. Womanhood stands almost a unit against the vice. The ultra-orthodoxy of the man of the street comes startlingly to the front in his profanity; yet men who have long lost all belief in hell still hold tenaciously to terminology long dropped out of their talk in polite circles. Is it not time to banish the whole sickening custom?